(b) the maximum number of mobile phone sets earmarked for the State;

(c) whether the number is fixed up according to population of the States of the North-East; and

(d) if not, what are other criteria followed in fixing up the number of mobile phones?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Mobile Phone Service is expected to be available in Tripura by March 2004.

(b) to (d) The Licence Agreement for Cellular Mobile Telephone Service, inter-alia, provides that in the Telecom Circles, atleast 10% of the District Headquarters (DHQs) will be covered in the first year and 50% of the District Headquarters will be covered within three years of effective date of Licence. The Licensee shall also be permitted to cover any other town in a District in lieu of the District Headquarters. The choice of District Headquarters/towns to be covered and further expansion beyond 50%. District Headquarters/towns shall lie with the Licensee depending on its business decision. As such, the Government does not monitor the individual private Service Provider's future plans in respect of the number of lines to be provided/earmarked by a Service Provider for a city/town/State in a particular Service Area.

For Tripura, a capacity of 6300 lines has been planned by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) based on criteria of covering DHQs and some important National Highways. Also, as reported by M/s Reliance Telecom Limited, a subscriber capacity of 6000 lines has been planned by them based on Market Survey.

Shortage of cellular services

207. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite BSNL's claim of providing cellular service all over the country including Jammu & Kashmir, there are still many States that face shortage in terms of service, connectivity and allocation of cellular phones;

(b) if so, the details of the States where such problems are arising; and

(c) by when, BSNL would overcome such problems in these States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. BSNL is the only operator providing Cellular services in all the States including Jammu & Kashmir except North Eastern States where the network is being commissioned shortly. The overwhelming demand for BSNL Cellular mobile connections has exhausted the network capacity in most of the States. Network expansion is a continuous process and BSNL has already initiated action to expand the network capacity to meet the growing demand.

(c) Network is planned to be expanded progressively to overcome such problems by next financial year.

Violation of License conditions for mobility to subscribers

208. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that certain private WLL operators had violated the license conditions to provide full mobility to its subscribers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government consider multiple registration and call forwarding a new technological innovation, if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, whether merging the licensing for GSM and CDMA services under a 'unified license' would not be construed as legitimization of the violation post facto; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Certain private Basic Service Operators offering Limited Mobility [WLL (M)] were providing the following features that blur the distinction between mobility of WLL (M) and Cellular Mobile Services;